



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Brad Sherwood
707.521.6204

Agencies Take Action to Restore Salmon

California Coast Steelhead and Chinook to Receive Recovery Funding

Santa Rosa, CA – Restrictions on salmon fishing have resulted in Governor Schwarzenegger declaring a state of emergency in ten California counties due to severe economic hardships to coastal communities. The situation is a crisis for fishermen. The Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) took action today to address this crisis. The Water Agency authorized \$400,000 in funding to support development of federal species recovery plans for Central California Coast Steelhead and California Coast Chinook salmon.

The Board of Directors also recognized Rod McInnis, the regional director of NMFS' southwest region, for efforts he and his Agency have made to cooperate with local interests in the effort to complete and adopt recovery plans.

"Completion of federal recovery plans for the North-Central California Coast Recovery Planning Domain is an important step toward recovery of the species and will have major economic benefits for the region," said Paul Kelley, Chairman, Sonoma County Board of Directors. "The completion of a recovery plan is necessary to fully address salmonid recovery needs."

Under the MOAs, the Agency will provide \$400,000 to NMFS to assist with development of federal recovery plans for Central California Coast Steelhead and California Coast Chinook Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs). NMFS Southwest Region will initiate development of the recovery plans.

"Work accomplished under the MOA seeks to build upon and extend existing salmonid conservation efforts in the Russian River Watershed," said Kelley. "The Agency is taking a leadership role to protect fisheries resources and to conserve and recover the listed salmonid species in the Russian River watershed."

NMFS will use the funding to develop recovery plan outlines, threat assessments, and prepare the Central California Coast Steelhead ESU and the California Coast Chinook ESU recovery plans.

“The Sonoma County Water Agency has demonstrated great vision by investing in an accurate assessment of the threats to salmon and steelhead,” said McInnis. “This analysis will help all of us to focus on fixing the most important issues that hinder salmon recovery in Sonoma and neighboring counties.”

Recently, the Agency has funded development of a threats assessment to facilitate completion of a federal recovery plan for California coho salmon, is organizing development of local action plans to implement the State’s *California Coho Recovery Strategy* in the Russian River watershed, is participating in a local coalition to develop salmon conservation plans for Alexander and Dry Creek valleys, and is working collaboratively to develop water rights solutions for the North Coast.

“The Agency continues to take a leadership role by building collaborative approaches with NMFS and other agency and community partners,” said Kelley. “ These partnerships help build collaborative approaches to resolve regional salmon issues and will help solve how recycled water use, water conservation, habitat protection and restoration, and water quality improvements will be implemented to recover salmon and steelhead stocks in the Russian River.”.

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